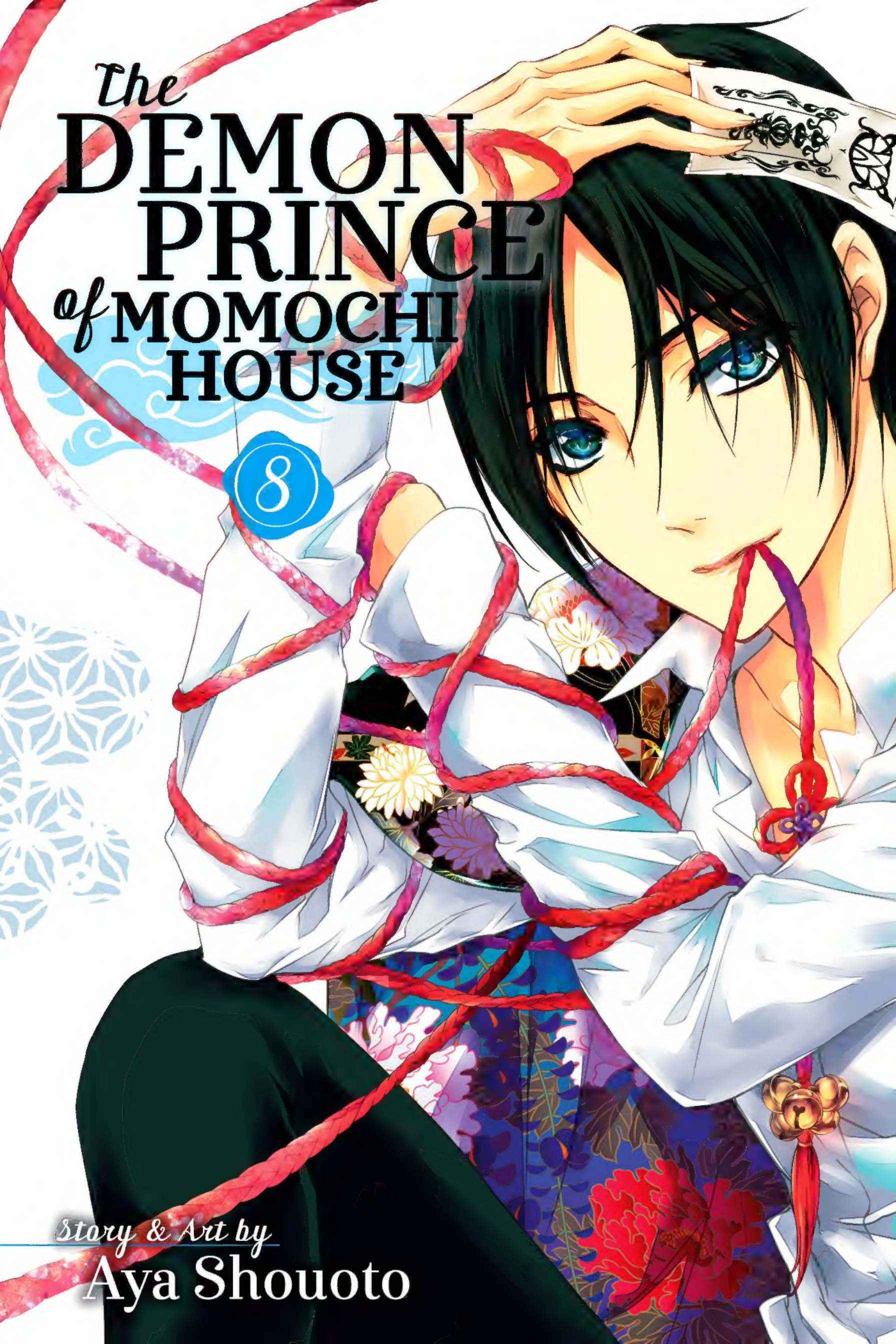
The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

8



Story & Art by

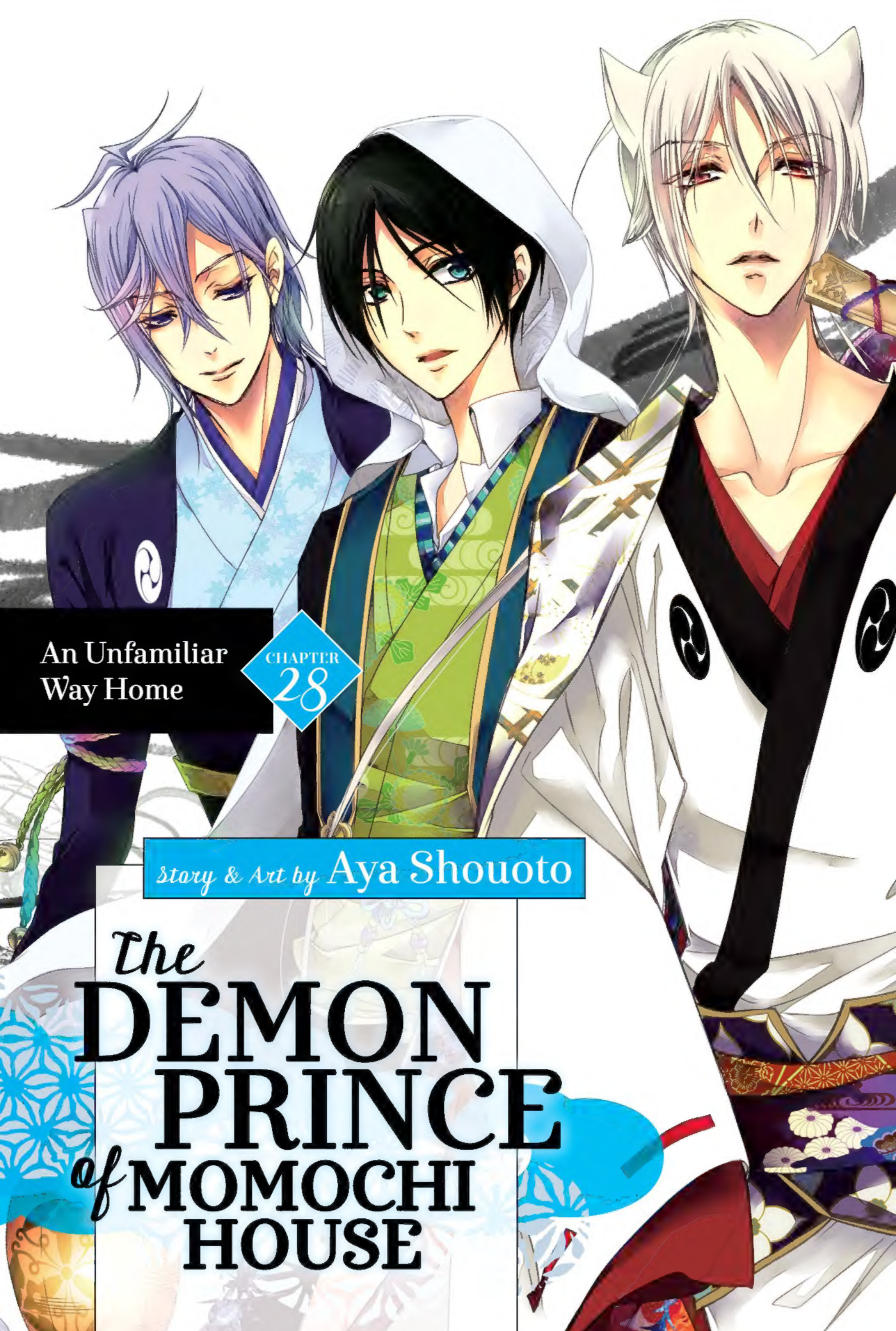
Aya Shouoto

CHAPTER 28

IT SEEMS I CAN NO LONGER TRANSFORM BACK.

"YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME."

An Unfamiliar Way Home
CHAPTER 28
Story & Art by Aya Shouoto
The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE



CHAPTER 28

An Unfamiliar Way Home

Story & Art by Aya Shouoto

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

8

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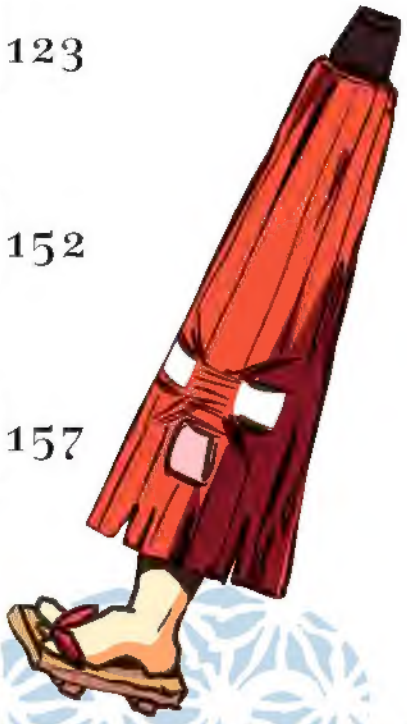


The Mysterious Residents of Momochi House

Aoi Nanamori

When he was 7 years old, he wandered into Momochi House and was chosen as the Omamori-sama. He transforms into a nue to perform his duties, but it seems this role was meant for Himari.

Omamori-sama (Nue)

An ayakashi, or demon, with the ears of a cat, the wings of a bird, and the tail of a fox. As the Omamori-sama, the nue protects Momochi House and eliminates demons who make their way in from the spiritual realm.

Ise

One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's an orangutan.

Yukari

One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's a water serpent.

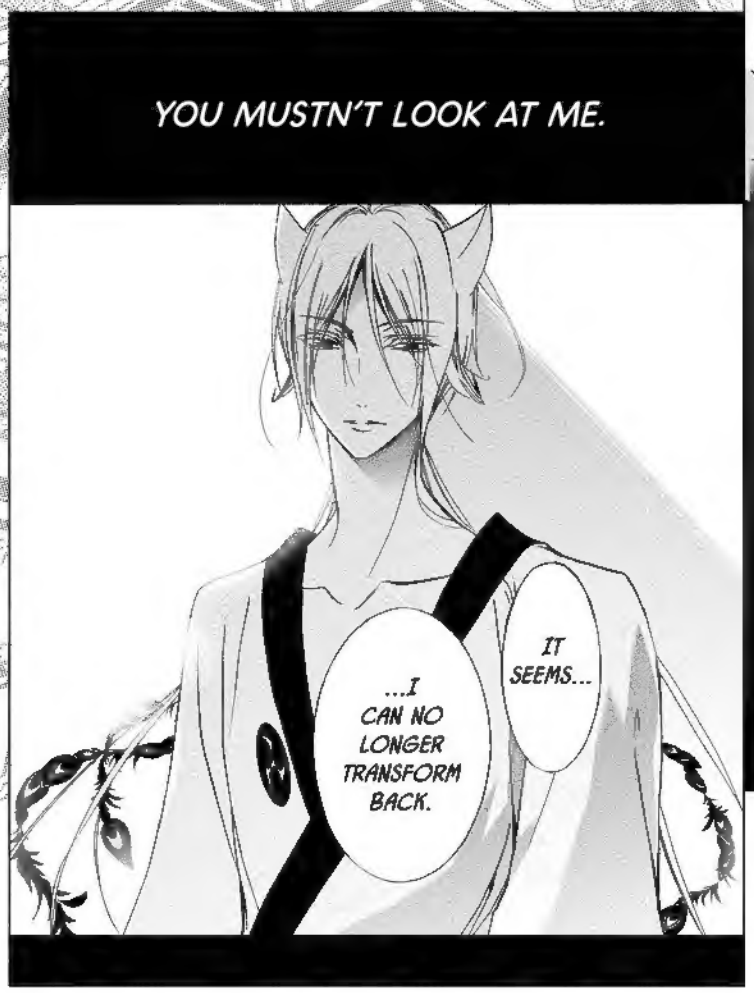
Himari Momochi

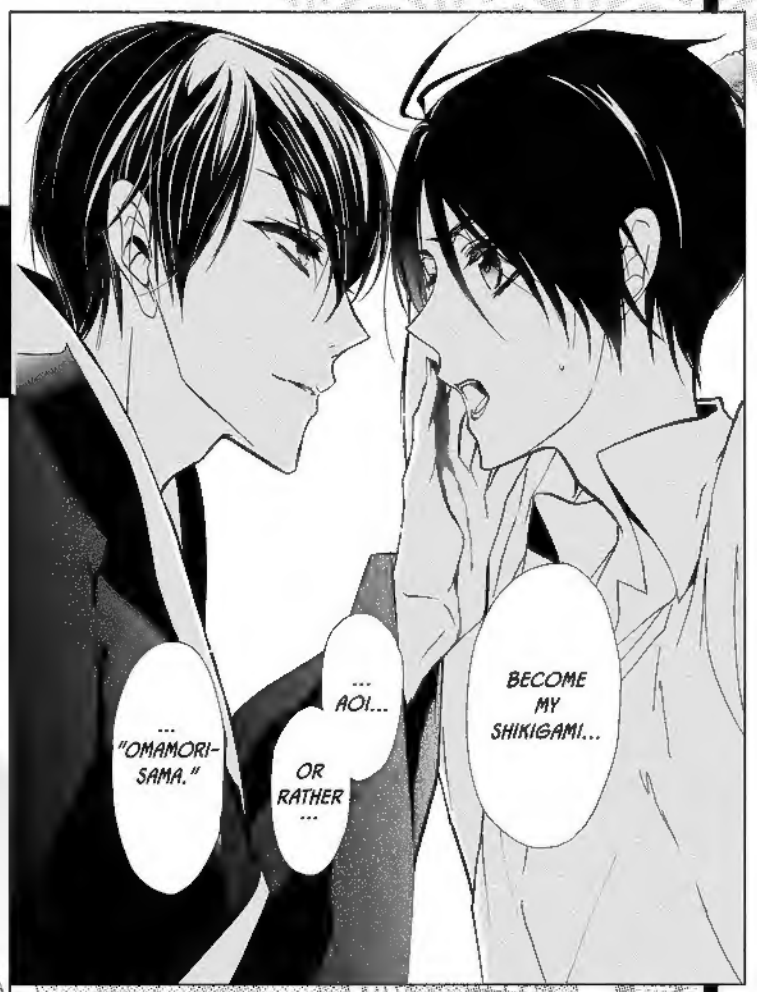
A 16-year-old orphan who, according to a certain will, has inherited Momochi House. As rightful owner, she has the ability to expel beings from the house.

Lesser Yokai

Momochi House: Story Thus Far

Aoi has fallen into a slump. In order to find a way to help him, Himari starts looking into Aoi's family. She finds the Nanamori family home on an ancient map of Mr. Nachi's. The location is an empty lot, but Himari sees a ghost there. The next day, at Senoo's suggestion, Himari investigates the ghost of Kagome Park as part of a summer research project. On the way home, a ghostly entity attaches itself to Senoo and makes its way into Momochi House. Nachi is revealed to be the one controlling Senoo. In the past, Nachi also tricked the young Aoi into entering Momochi House in order to turn him into a shikigami. Nachi uses a kotodama technique to control Aoi and his shikigami, but just in the nick of time, Aoi transforms into the Nue and defeats Nachi. But the relief is short-lived: Aoi can no longer return to his human form!





TOK

DID I MAKE TOO MUCH BREAKFAST FOR YOU?

YUKARI...

HE'S NOT SICK IN BED, RIGHT?

NO, BUT...

AFTER AOI TOLD ME HE COULDN'T TRANSFORM BACK...

...I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO HIM, AND WE'VE BEEN KEPT SEPARATED.

IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS. AM I STILL NOT ALLOWED TO SEE AOI—I MEAN, NUE?

HIMARI...

I'M WORRIED. I WANT TO SEE HIM EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

ZUSHI, TAIKOMOCHI ...

ME THREE.

I'D LIKE TO SEE AOI TOO...

PWOP

...

ALL RIGHT...

I'LL ASK NUE IF IT'S OKAY.

WE'D LIKE TO APOLOGIZE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IT WAS IMPROPER OF US TO BE CONTROLLED BY ONE OF HIS ENEMIES.

FIDGET

FIDGET

KLAK

NUE...

THIS IS ANOTHER PART OF THE HOUSE I DON'T KNOW...

THIS WAY.

HIMARI WISHES TO SEE YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING IN THIS ROOM?

...

I'M HIS SHIKI-GAMI!

RIGHT BACK AT YOU!

I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU WERE.

KLAK

YOU RABBLE AREN'T ALLOWED IN YET.

WHOA.

THERE YOU GO, HIMARI.

GRAB

!

YOU MAY ENTER.

HUH? WHY?

I DON'T MIND IF IT'S FOR A MOMENT.

PHOO

JOLT

FOOM

THANKS FOR COMING.

AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M PERFECTLY COMFORT-ABLE.

WAS THAT ODD SENSATION JUST MY IMAGINA-TION?

SHMP

NUE IS HIS USUAL SELF.

...

THANK GOOD-NESS... YOU SEEM WELL.

WHY A BARRIER?

THEY'RE A PRECAUTION-ARY BARRIER... SOMETHING TO PUT MY MIND AT EASE.

WHAT ARE THE SHIMENAWA FOR?

YOU MEAN WHAT IS IT FOR?

BARRIERS ARE ALWAYS MEANT TO SEAL IN BAD THINGS.

TELL ME...

...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO AOI?

...

FROM WHAT I GATHER...

AOI'S PAST—HIS MEMORIES OF HIS FAMILY—HAD BEEN SEALED AWAY BY TAKAMURA NACHI'S SPELL.

NOW THAT SPELL IS BROKEN, THOSE MEMORIES WERE SUPPOSED TO GRADUALLY RETURN.

BUT ONCE HE BECAME AWARE THAT THEY WERE MISSING...

...HIS AYAKASHI CONSCIOUS-NESS FILLED THAT VOID INSTEAD.

THE GAP IN HIS MEMORIES...

...YOU'RE STUCK AS THE NUE.

THAT'S WHY...

SHUDDER

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME...

...TO TAKE THEM TO OUR SIDE...

WE ENTER PEOPLE'S MINDS...

I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD STORIES...

...OF PEOPLE WANDERING INTO AYAKASHI PARTIES...

...ONLY TO DISCOVER THEY'VE BECOME AYAKASHI TOO.

THE MEANING OF THOSE WORDS...

SO...

KLAK

YUKARI.

YES.

HIMARI, IT'S TIME.

I DON'T WANT...

THIS IS SO SUDDEN...

HIMARI.

BUT...

IN THAT CASE–

...I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD COME HERE TO SEE ME THAT OFTEN.

...BECAUSE THIS HAS HAPPENED...

IF YOUR PAST MEMORIES ARE RETURNED TO YOU...

...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TRANSFORM BACK?

THAT BOY...

IT MIGHT BE...

...

...PAINFUL FOR AOI...

I DON'T WANT HIM...

BUT...

...TO END UP...

...LEAVING ME.

AOI IS LOST.

PLEASE ...

LET ME SEARCH FOR YOUR PAST.

VERY WELL.

BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH.

KLAK

SHE

!

THANK YOU!

HIMARI, IT'S TIME TO GO.

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

AOI...

...WILL BECOME HIMSELF AGAIN.

I'LL FIND HIS PAST...

KLAK

DON'T YOU AGREE, NUE?

SHE NEVER EVEN ASKED WHETHER YOU WANT TO TURN BACK. HOW CONVENIENT SHE'S SO SIMPLE-MINDED.

KASHA, DON'T COME THROUGH THE REAR SCREEN...

...WITH-OUT PERMIS-SION.

YOU REMAINING IN THAT FORM HAS FILLED MOMOCHI HOUSE WITH AYAKASHI ENERGY...

...AND THAT IS CONVENIENT FOR ME.

I'M PRETTY SURE YOU DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT YOUR PAST...

...ANY-MORE.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

YOU STILL SEEM UNEASY AND UNAC-CUSTOMED TO YOUR FORM.

HEH

HEH

...

YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS, KASHA.

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M NOT STUPID ENOUGH...

...TO TREAT YOU LIKE A FRIEND AND TELL YOU MY TRUE FEELINGS.

...

OH?

DOES THAT MEAN YOU INTEND TO RESIST?

...

THIS IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN.

FASCI-NATING.

I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

...

DON'T LAY A HAND ON HIMARI.

...

I JUST TOLD HIM IT'S NONE OF HIS CON-CERN...

NOW THEN, WHAT SHALL I DO THIS TIME?

I ENJOY WATCHING YOU STRUGGLE.

I NEED TO DISCOVER AOI'S PAST...

HMM...

...BUT HIS HOUSE WASN'T ON THE OLD MAP.

HIMARI ...

WHERE CAN I FIND CLUES?

YESTERDAY I WENT TO A TOWN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAINS TO GIVE OUT CANDY FOR THE CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION.

AND I FOUND IT...

WHAT ?

THE NANAMORI HOUSE.

!

TOK

I RAN OUT OF CANDY AND WASN'T ABLE TO DELIVER ANY TO THE NANAMORI HOUSE.

RUI...

I THOUGHT I WOULD ASK FOR YOUR HELP.

WHAT A COINCI-DENCE!

ANYWAY...

I WONDER... BUT THAT HOUSE IS IN A NEIGHBORING TOWN.

...THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE.

TOK

THANKS, RUI!

HOW-EVER...

SHFF

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE NANAMORI FAMILY, RIGHT?

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THIS AS A WAY TO MEET THEM?

ACCORD-
ING TO THE
PEOPLE IN
TOWN..

...THE
NANAMORI
FAMILY...

...LOST A
CHILD.

VROOO

YEEN

IT'S A
FAIRLY OLD
HOUSE ON
THE OUT-
SKIRTS OF
TOWN.

A
COLLEGE
PROFESSOR
AND HIS
WIFE LIVE
THERE...

...WITH
THEIR
DAUGHTER
WHO'S IN
SECOND
GRADE.

KRIII

KRIII

THEY DO
LIVE FAR
FROM
TOWN.

NOT
AS FAR AS
MOMOCHI
HOUSE,
THOUGH.

KRIII

KRIII

BUT...

I WANT YOU TO TAKE TWO BAGS JUST IN CASE.

SOME PEOPLE SAID THEY HAD LOST A CHILD...

...AND OTHERS SAY THEY'VE SEEN THEIR DAUGHTER PLAYING WITH SIBLINGS.

DO THEY REMEMBER AOI AS THEIR CHILD WHO DIED?

OR...

...PERHAPS AOI REALLY IS DEAD.

HYOOO

SWIP SWIP

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

SWF

SHOOF

WHAT IS THIS FEELING?

IS SOMEONE THERE?

?!

SHU

MP

YO.

WHA-?!

A WILD THUG APPEARED ?!

ISE?!

SHIK

W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!

NUE TOLD ME TO WATCH YOU...

...SO THAT YOU WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING RIDICULOUS.

I had no choice.

ANYTHING RIDICU-LOUS?

I'M JUST GOING TO A NEIGHBORING TOWN. I DON'T NEED ANYONE TO KEEP AN EYE ON ME.

AND WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT?

WHAT?!

I'M DRESSED LIKE A HUMAN SO PEOPLE WON'T THINK I'M SUSPI-CIOUS.

I'M GOING TO SEE A CHILD.

YOU LOOK TOTALLY SUSPI-CIOUS!

WHICH PART?!

HOW?!

ANYWAY...

I'M NOT IN ANY...

VOOSH

KRIII

KRIII

SPLASH

...DANGER.

I'M SO VERY SORRY.

NO, I WASN'T PAYING ATTEN-TION...

SHE SEEMS LIKE A KIND MOTHER.

...SO WHEN I WATER THE YARD, I SPRAY EVERYWHERE... I SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL.

NOT MANY PEOPLE PASS THROUGH HERE...

NO NEED TO THANK ME. YOUR CLOTHES SHOULD DRY QUICKLY IN THIS HEAT. IT WILL BE ONLY A SHORT WHILE.

THANKS FOR LENDING ME SOME CLOTHES.

I'LL BRING MORE TEA AND SNACKS.

HMPH

ISE, YOU'RE EATING TOO MUCH!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO STAY VERY LONG.

KRIII

KRIII

KRIII

I'M GLAD SOMEONE FROM THE CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION CAME BY.

BUT SHE DOESN'T RESEMBLE AOI.

I'm glad the contents didn't get wet.

OH, THE BAGS OF CANDY HAVE DRIED.

THIS MIGHT BE THE WRONG FAMILY.

THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THE WAY HERE. AKANE IS STILL AT SCHOOL, SO I'LL MAKE SURE SHE GETS THIS.

OH...

SO JUST ONE BAG THEN, RIGHT?

OH

WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT? YOUR CLOTHES ARE STILL DAMP.

I'LL BE FINE. MY BUS HOME IS COMING SOON.

I SEE.

YES, JUST ONE.

A VISITOR?

I'M HOME!

TMP

AKANE.

OH...

THANKS FOR THE TEA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.

HUH?

JUST NOW...!!

FOR A MOMENT...

SOMEONE FROM THE CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION BROUGHT YOU SOME CANDY.

CANDY!

HELLO, AKANE.

YOU'RE WELCOME!

THANK YOU FOR THE CANDY!

...RATHER THAN AOI?

WHAT'S THIS?

TMP

...SHE LOOKED LIKE THE NUE...

AKANE, YOU SHOULDN'T WALK HOME BY YOURSELF.

BUT... I WASN'T BY MYSELF.

WELL, I'M OFF. BYE-BYE!

WHY DID I THINK...

DO WE HAVE A VISITOR?

OH!

I'M DELIVERING CANDY ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN'S ASSOCIA-TION...

OH...

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

DAD!

YOU'RE HOME EARLY, DARLING.

I PICKED UP AKANE ALONG THE WAY.

WHAT IS IT?

AOI...

...REALLY LOOKS LIKE...

...HIS FATHER.

THAT WAS AOI'S FAMILY.

WINNER

SHF

MOM, I WON SOME GUM!

SMILE

OH, HOW WON-DERFUL!

TMP
TMP
OH! THERE SHE IS!
DASH
I'M GOING TO TELL THAT GIRL!
HUH?
DON'T GO TOO FAR.
YOU THINK THAT WAS AOI'S FAMILY?
I'M NOT SO SURE.
JOLT
BUT YOU SAW IT TOO, RIGHT?
THE FATHER LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE AOI.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.

THAT'S NOT REALLY AOI'S...

DASH

MMBL ...

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

...

MMBL

...

MMBL

...

MMBL

...

MMBL

THOSE PEOPLE KNOW AOI!

MMBL

WHAT'LL I DO?

...

MMBL

...

MMBL

...

MMBL

YES, THAT'S IT.

WHAT WERE YOU SAYING, ISE?

I WILL DEVOUR THEM.

THAT GIRL IS AN AYAKASHI.

WHAT?

HMM...

I WONDER HOW MUCH SHE CAN ACCOMPLISH.

I WON'T LAY A HAND ON HER.

VHHM

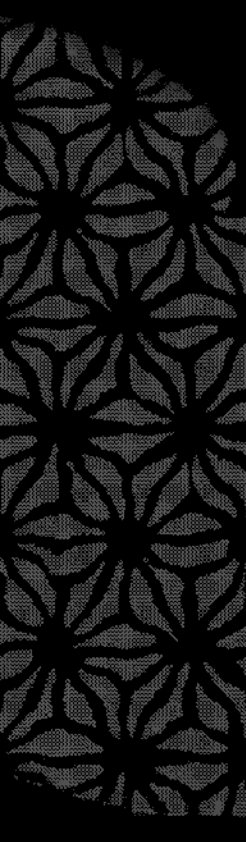
SHE BARELY EVEN CASTS A SHADOW.

I WANT TO PLAY WITH SOMEONE...

...CHAOTIC LIKE YOU...

SHALL WE MAKE A WAGER, NUE?

Chapter 28/End



The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

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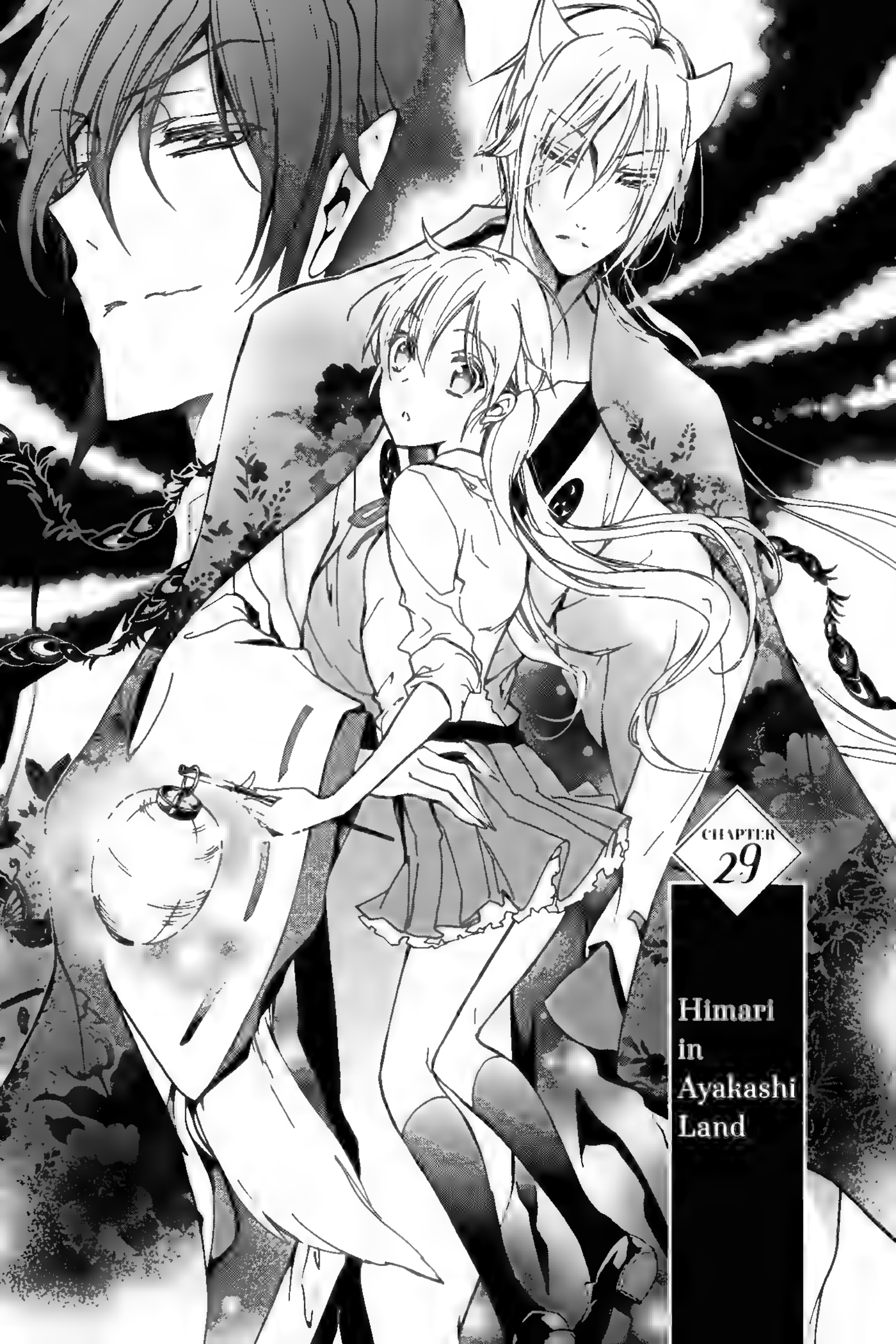

CHAPTER
29
Himari
in
Ayakashi
Land

SHALL WE MAKE A WAGER, NUE?

LET'S SEE WHETHER HIMARI CAN FIND YOUR LOST PAST...

...BEFORE YOUR SOUL COMPLETELY MERGES WITH THE NUE.

BLUNT

I WON'T MAKE A WAGER WITH YOU.

...

...

IN EXCHANGE ...

...

...I WON'T LAY A HAND ON THAT GIRL.

...

LOOK.

I'M INSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

IT'S PROOF THAT YOU'RE NOT ENTIRELY OPPOSED TO ME.

THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT.

TMP

NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES FROM DEALING WITH YOU.

YOU ONLY BENEFIT.

YOU TRUST HER, DON'T YOU?

IF YOU DO, THERE SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.

PLAY A GAME WITH ME.

BUT...

...WON'T INTERFERE WITH THAT GIRL.

BOTH YOU...

...AND I...

WHAT IS IT?

...I'LL TAKE IT FOR MYSELF.

IF SHE DOESN'T FIND YOUR PAST...

TELL... ME... NOW!

QUIT PESTERING ME!

KRIK KRIK KRIK

I WANT YOU TO TELL ME!

I'M SERIOUS!

THEY WEREN'T AOI'S PARENTS?

YOU SAID THAT WASN'T AOI'S FAMILY.

ISE...

LET'S BEGIN.

SOMETHING YOU LOST ONCE TO A HUMAN...

...CAN'T BE ALL THAT VALUABLE, RIGHT?

IT WAS SO LONG AGO... I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER.

LIAR!!

You can't fool me!

OKAY THEN!

I HAD MY SHIKIGAMI INVESTIGATE.

APPARENTLY IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD, IT'S AS IF I NEVER EXISTED.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, YOU MUST KNOW ALL ABOUT HIS FAMILY!

AOI MENTIONED SOMETHING BEFORE...

WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID AKANE WAS AN AYAKASHI?

JUST THAT.

I SAID SHE WAS AN AYAKASHI BECAUSE SHE IS ONE. IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU...

BUT IT'S SOMETHING TO DO WITH AOI?

...

WE ARE SHIKIGAMI.

YUKARI...

HIMARI.

ISE!

KLAK

YUKARI...

GLOOM

...I'M SURE YOU REALIZE...

ANY-WAY...

WE CANNOT TELL YOU...

...ANYTHING THAT AOI WON'T.

I CAN'T ASK THAT FAMILY...

...WHETHER THEY REMEMBER AOI.

IF HE'S THE CHILD THEY LOST...

NO...

THEY PROBABLY DON'T EVEN REMEMBER.

IT'S AS IF I NEVER EXISTED.

AOI'S PAST...

I KNOW...

...BUT I'M AT A DEAD END.

...THIS ISN'T WHAT AOI- OR RATHER, NUE-MEANT...

...WHEN HE SAID...

...YOU COULD LOOK INTO HIS PAST.

SIGH

HE'S ON THE VERGE OF FORGETTING HIMSELF.

...WAS FORGOTTEN BY EVERYONE.

WHAT WOULD I DO IN HIS SITUATION?

MY MEMORIES.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE ME WHO I AM.

MY PAST.

IF...

...I DIDN'T HAVE THOSE THINGS...

IT'S SUCH A VAGUE FEELING...

KLATT

WHAT WAS THAT? A LESSER YOKAI?!

JOLT

KLATT

KLATT

KLATT

IS IT TRYING TO SCARE ME? I WON'T FALL FOR THAT...

KLATT

NO...

OH

GLOW

INSIDE THAT CHEST OF DRAWERS...

KLAK
THE WINTER CHERRY LANTERN...
...IS SHOWING ME A PATH.
THAT LANTERN...
IT'S SUPPOSED TO LIGHT THE WAY OF THE PATH TO TRUTH.
BUT ONLY ONCE.
GLOW
JUST ONCE...
GLOW
...
I HAVE TO GO.

THE WINTER CHERRY LANTERN...

THAT LANTERN...

IT'S SUPPOSED TO LIGHT THE WAY OF THE PATH TO TRUTH.

KA-CHA

...IS SHOWING ME A PATH.

...

I HAVE TO GO.

GLOW

JUST ONCE...

GLOW

BUT ONLY ONCE.

TUP

WHERE AM I HEADED?

KLAK

WHAT WILL THIS ANSWER?

IT'S PITCH BLACK. AM I IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM?

I DON'T HAVE THAT TRIANGLUAR HEADPIECE TO PROTECT ME.

I'M ON MY OWN.

BUT...

GRIT

IT APPEARS THAT GIRL HAS WANDERED INTO THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

AND SHE SEEMS TO BE CARRYING AN INTERESTING-LOOKING LANTERN.

I'M SURE THERE'S SOMETHING AT THE END OF THIS PATH.

IT'S THE PATH TO TRUTH.

NEKO-BABA'S HAIR ORNAMENT.

WHEN DID HIMARI...

HM...

AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU ACCEPTED THE WAGER?

SUFF

WHAT'S THIS?

GLOW

SHOOM

IF SHE HAPPENS TO COME ACROSS THESE AYAKASHI...

SUFF

ANY AYAKASHI WHO HAPPEN BY...

...I WON'T INCITE THEM BY REVEALING SHE'S A MOMOCHI.

OF COURSE NOT.

...WILL QUICKLY LOSE SIGHT OF HER PATH.

SO...

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF I WIN?

...

THAT'S...

...A GATE-WAY?

...

SHE'S REACHED THE GUARDIAN OF THE GATE.

OH MY...

THE PATH GOES THROUGH IT...

THE ONLY THING HERE...

...IS THIS GATE.

TMP

TOK TOK TOK

I'D LIKE YOU TO OPEN THIS GATE!

IS ANYONE HERE?

IN THAT CASE...

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WOULDN'T BUDGE.

URGH!

SILENCE

I GUESS NOT...

HMM...

YOU SMELL...

...VERY NICE...

EEEEK!

VUP

WHY WOULD YOU SCREAM LIKE THAT?

AH... YOU'RE HUMAN, AREN'T YOU?

I NEVER EXPECTED ONE OF YOU TO COME ALL THE WAY HERE.

AN AYAKASHI ?

GR

AB

YOU SEEM LIKE A TASTY SNACK...

...THAT WOULD GO WELL WITH SOME SAKE.

LET ME EAT YOU.

GRIN

N...

GYAAH!!!

JOLT

I have no energy without it...

THERE'S NO MORE SAKE!

I'M OUT!

PLIP

SHK

SHK

HE GAVE UP ALREADY ?!

JUMP

I JUST CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT LIQUOR.

I DON'T FEEL LIKE WORKING ANYMORE.

WORK?!

YOU MEAN THIS GATE-

YEAH, I'M THE GUARDIAN OF THE GATE.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE GATE!

OPEN THIS GATE!

I WANT TO PASS THROUGH.

PLEASE!

WHAT FOR?

...

I WANT TO GO TO THE PLACE THIS WINTER CHERRY LANTERN...

...IS LEADING ME.

I'M SEARCHING FOR THE PAST OF SOMEONE WHO IS IMPORTANT TO ME.

OH?

IF SO...

WHERE'S YOUR ENTRANCE PASS?

HUH?

...

I DON'T HAVE ONE.

IN ORDER TO PASS THROUGH THIS GATEWAY IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, YOU NEED AN ENTRANCE PASS.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE...

...I'LL HAVE TO ACCEPT A SOUL.

ANYONE'S SOUL WILL DO.

IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

B-BUT THEN...

...I'LL DIE ONCE YOU OPEN IT! STOP TEASING ME.

JOLT

!

AND IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, WELL...

GIVE ME THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT THING AFTER YOUR SOUL...

...YOUR NAME.

MY... MY NAME?

THAT'S RIGHT. GIVE ME YOUR NAME.

OH?

SO YOU'RE THE MOMOCHI GIRL I'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT...

"HIMARI MOMOCHI"...

HM.

THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU SMELL SO TASTY.

IF ONLY I HAD SOME SAKE.

BUT...

I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE THE MOMOCHI NAME FROM YOU.

HI-MA-RI. I SEE...

SO THAT'S HOW YOU WRITE IT...

DO YOU SEE SOME-THING?

MY TRUE NAME?

I HAVE AN IDEA.

I SEE ALL THE BONDS AND KARMA SURROUNDING YOU.

YOUR TRUE NAME... I'LL TAKE SOMETHING FROM THAT.

I'M TAKING ONE KANJI.

N...

NO!

HUH?

THIS IS QUITE NICE. AN UNUSUAL FLAVOR...

FOOM

OH?

THE LANTERN...

IT BROKE APART.

...TOOK THE PLACE OF YOUR TRUE NAME.

THE "LIGHT" OF THAT WINTER CHERRY LANTERN...

GULP

WHY?

I'LL ACCEPT IT AS PAYMENT.

YOU DON'T SEEM TO KNOW...

...THE TRUE NAME YOUR PARENTS GAVE YOU.

THE *HI* IN YOUR NAME IS THE KANJI FOR "LIGHT."

THE NAME MY PARENTS GAVE ME...

I DIDN'T KNOW MY NAME COULD BE WRITTEN THAT WAY.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS MEANT TO BE IN HIRAGANA.

IT HAS SIGNIFICANCE. THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THE LANTERN POPPED.

SIGNIFI-CANCE ?

NOW THEN.

I'M OPENING THE GATE...

...TO THE PLACE YOU WISH TO GO.

BUT...

...NOW THAT THE LANTERN IS BROKEN, I CAN'T SEE THE PATH.

THAT IS NOT A PROBLEM.

THIS GATE CAN CONNECT YOU...

...TO ANY LOCATION WITH A WISH.

A WISH...

KR

EEE

I MUST WISH...

...STRONGLY...

EEEE

TMP

THIS PLACE...

WELCOME.

HOW NICE OF YOU TO VISIT.

THESE ARE THE DRAWERS OF THOUGHT. THIS PLACE IS THE STORAGE ROOM FOR THE MEMORY OF ALL THINGS.

!

SHELVES OF MEMO-RIES...

KREEEE

SEE YOU LATER, MOMOCHI GIRL.

I HOPE TO HAVE SOME SAKE THE NEXT TIME WE MEET.

KISS

I DON'T THINK WE'LL MEET AGAIN!

BUT...

...THANK YOU!

KACHAK

ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR THE PAST?

VISITOR...

THE GATE DISAP-PEARED.

VOON

ONE'S KARMA...

...ONE'S CONNEC-TIONS AND MEMORIES...

EVERYTHING ABOUT A PERSON IS STORED IN THESE DRAWERS.

CAN YOU TELL?

THAT'S RIGHT.

THAT IS WHAT THIS PLACE IS FOR.

GIVE ME YOUR NAME.

OH

I'M HIMARI MOMOCHI!

BUT...

I CAME HERE TO FIND THE PAST OF SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO ME.

SOMEONE BY THE NAME OF AOI NANAMORI...

I UNDER-STAND.

NOD

KLAT KLAT KLAT KLAT

THE DRAW-ERS...

KA-TAK

AOI NANAMORI

...AOI NANAMORI'S DRAWER.

THAT IS...

AOI'S PAST IS HERE.

IF I OPEN THIS–

HOW-EVER...

AH! THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

...A SOUL IS ONLY ALLOWED...

...TO OPEN A SINGLE DRAWER.

THAT THERE...

...IS YOUR DRAWER...

HIMARI MOMOCHI

...HIMARI MOMOCHI.

MINE...

HUH?

FOR EXAMPLE...

WITHIN IT...

...ARE YOUR MEMORIES AND KARMA.

IT CONTAINS KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR PARENTS.

KNOWLEDGE OF...MY PARENTS...

Will

THEY DIED IN AN ACCIDENT.

ALL I KNOW IS WHAT I READ IN THAT WILL.

I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING...

...ABOUT THEM.

YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOOK INSIDE.

DO YOU WISH TO PROCEED?

THEN...

WHAT ABOUT THE KANJI FOR *MA*?

AND *RI*?

THE HI *IN YOUR NAME IS THE KANJI FOR "LIGHT."*

THE TRUE NAME YOUR PARENTS GAVE YOU...

WHY DID THEY CHOOSE THAT NAME FOR ME?

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WERE THEY?

...

EVEN IF I CAN ONLY EVER OPEN ONE...

KLENCH

...I CHOOSE AOI NANAMORI'S DRAWER.

AOI NANAMORI

AND I ALSO REALIZE...

...JUST HOW STRONG YOU ARE.

...AND ARRIVING HERE...

SEARCHING FOR YOUR LOST PAST...

...IN THIS PLACE...

...HAS MADE ME REALIZE...

AOI...

...HOW DISTRAUGHT YOU ARE.

YOU'RE ALWAYS SMILING.

FOR...

I'VE MADE IT THIS FAR...

...FOR THAT SMILE.

...YOUR TRUE SMILE.

VOOSH!

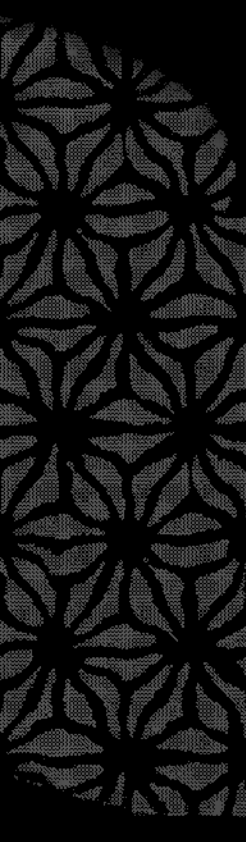
SHK

...

DO YOU WISH TO PROCEED?

I WILL TELL YOU THE STORY OF MY PAST.

Chapter 29/End



The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

CHAPTER
30
The Tale of Aoi's Past

I WILL TELL YOU THE STORY OF MY PAST.

CLOSE YOUR EYES.

A YOUNG...

...AOI?

KRIII

KRIII

IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, BY THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS TO THE NORTH...

...THERE WAS A HOUSE. DESPITE HAVING A RATHER OLD WELL AND STORE-HOUSE...

...IT WAS OTHERWISE A FAIRLY ORDINARY RESIDENCE.

MY FATHER WAS A QUIET MAN. HE OFTEN HAD TO BE AWAY FROM HOME FOR WORK.

THUP THUP

MOM! CAN I COME IN?

AOI...

THUP THUP

WHAT IS IT? PLAYING HIDE-AND-SEEK?

Here.

SHFF

I FOUND YOU, AOI!

HE'S THE YOUNGEST. HE CAN'T HELP IT.

WHAT A MAMA'S BOY!

YOU ALWAYS HIDE AROUND MOM.

AWW...

YOU THINK SO?

UH...

BUT...

PWOP

PWOP

PWOP

TMP

TMP

TMP

TMP

IT'S YOUR TURN TO BE "IT," AOI.

MY MOTHER HAD BEEN SICK FOR A LONG TIME AND NEEDED TO STAY IN BED.

BUT THANKS TO MY SEVEN SIBLINGS, I WAS NEVER LONELY.

ONE... TWO... ... THREE...

NOW COUNT TO TEN.

I don't want to be 'it'

ARE YOU READY?

NOT YET!

THUP

NOT YET!

ARE YOU-

I'M READY!

ARE YOU HERE?

KRIK

I'M READY...

...

SHUSH!

!

I ALWAYS TELL YOU, DON'T I?

PRETEND YOU DON'T SEE THEM...

...AOI.

THEY'RE CALLED AYAKASHI.

...AND SOMETIMES THEY SCARE ME BY SAYING I LOOK DELICIOUS.

BUT THEY ALWAYS APPEAR SUDDENLY...

I'M SCARED.

CHASE THEM AWAY, BIG SIS.

THEY EXIST EVERYWHERE.

BUT THEY USUALLY ONLY TRY TO FRIGHTEN PEOPLE.

YOU MUSTN'T RELY ON US, AOI...

...SO THAT YOU CAN LEARN TO SURVIVE ON YOUR OWN.

MOM PASSED AWAY...

LET'S PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK, AOI.

HUH? BUT...

COUNT TO TEN...

FOUR ...

...FIVE, SIX...

... SEVEN ...

...

TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP

ARE YOU READY?

...AND MY SEVEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALSO DISAPPEARED.

KREEE

KA-CHA

MY MOM WAS UP IN THE SKY...

...SO I ASKED MY FATHER WHERE MY SIBLINGS HAD GONE.

HE GAVE ME A TROUBLED LOOK AND SAID...

AOI...

YOU'RE AN ONLY CHILD.

I NEVER GAVE UP AND KEPT LOOKING FOR MY SIBLINGS...

BUT EVENTU-ALLY I UNDER-STOOD...

...THAT I COULD SEE...

...THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T BE SEEN.

...

...BUT MY FATHER COULDN'T SEE MY SIBLINGS.

MY MOTHER SEEMED TO KNOW...

LET'S CONTINUE.

IS THIS APPARITION I SEE...A YOUNGER AOI?

THEY ARE KNOWN BY THAT NAME.

...ZASHIKI WARASHI?

DOES THAT MEAN THEY WERE...

*Zashiki warashi are child spirits that inhabit homes and bring great fortune.

NOW THAT IT WAS ONLY ME AND MY FATHER, THE HOUSE BECAME VERY QUIET.

...MY FATHER THOUGHT I WAS LONELY.

BECAUSE I ASKED ABOUT PHANTOM SIBLINGS...

SO ONE YEAR LATER...

...HE MARRIED HIS SECRETARY.

HELLO, AOI.

SHE WAS A KIND WOMAN.

OH.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, AOI? WHY HAVE YOU MADE THIS MESS?

How unusual

I THOUGHT ...

...IF I DID THIS, BIG SIS AND THE OTHERS WOULD COME BACK...

HEE

OH

"BIG SIS"?

AH. NOTHING.

AAAH!

JOLT

AOI?

SLAP

...

OH. SORRY...

I'M SORRY...

I SAW SOMETHING DARK ON YOUR SHOULDER.

I WONDER ...

...IF AOI IS MAKING UP THESE STORIES BECAUSE HE HATES ME AND WANTS ME TO LEAVE.

THAT'S NOT TRUE.

THEY'RE CALLED AYAKASHI.

I WAS TRYING TO GET AOI, BUT THIS ONE SEEMS EASIER.

ANOTHER WEAKLING ENTERED THIS HOUSE.

CAN WE EAT IT?

JOLT

OH?

SOON AFTER, MY STEPMOTHER BECAME PREGNANT.

PRETEND YOU DON'T SEE THEM.

THEY COME HERE BECAUSE OF ME.

I UNDER-STAND NOW...

I SEARCHED SO LONG FOR YOU!

BUT...

...

I TRIED MY BEST TO ISOLATE MYSELF.

I DIS-TANCED MYSELF FROM MY FRIENDS...

...AND MY PARENTS.

HEY! WHY DON'T YOU EVER COME HOME BY DINNERTIME NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I REMIND YOU?

MY STEP-MOTHER'S DIFFICULT PREGNANCY HAD MADE HER ANXIOUS.

THAT WASN'T GOOD.

LOOK AT ME!

BAM

DON'T YOU KNOW HOW WORRIED I AM ABOUT YOU?

...

...BUT I NEVER SAID A WORD.

THINGS GOT WORSE...

THUD

THAT LOOK AGAIN!

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?!

SLAP

THAT'S WHEN...

...I MET NACHI IN THE PARK.

HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDER-STOOD.

HE COULD SEE AYAKASHI LIKE ME.

MAYBE EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY IF YOU DISAPPEAR.

YES

DO IT MORE

HEH HEH

YOU KEEP SAYING YOU SEE BAD THINGS...

...TO GET RID OF ME AND MY UNBORN CHILD!

BACK THEN I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO EXPEL AYAKASHI.

ALL I COULD DO WAS PRETEND I DIDN'T SEE THEM AND TRY TO ENDURE IT.

I THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

HE MIGHT BE RIGHT.

AYAKASHI COME HERE BECAUSE OF ME.

IF I GO TO MOMOCHI HOUSE...

... ALONE ...

...AND LEAVE EVERY-ONE...

AOI!

DON'T YOU KNOW HOW WORRIED I AM ABOUT YOU?

...

I DON'T WANT TO...

THIS ENTIRE TIME...

SUFF

SUFF

...I FOCUSED SO MUCH ON WHAT I SHOULDN'T SEE THAT I OVERLOOKED OTHER THINGS.

THUP THUP

I'LL SAY SORRY...

...AND TELL HER...

...I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING A YOUNGER SISTER.

I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GO AWAY.

THUP THUP

FIRST, I'LL SAY SORRY...

MOM... WHERE ARE YOU?

KLAT

I'M HOME!

KLAK

JOLT

OH!

MOM...

...

MOM, LISTEN...

BOMP

PHOO

ZZZ

OH, SHE'S JUST ASLEEP.

YOU SHOULD JUST DISAPPEAR.

YOU CAN HEAR ME, CAN'T YOU?

Z Z Z

HUH?

HEH ...

QUIVER

YOU SHOULD DISAP-PEAR.

...THOUGH I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THE WAY.

BEFORE I REALIZED IT, I WAS RUNNING AS FAST AS I COULD...

MY LITTLE SISTER BECAME AN AYAKASHI BECAUSE OF ME.

...THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS TO THAT HOUSE...

...HIMARI MOMOCHI.

AFTER RUNNING AND RUNNING...

...I EVEN-TUALLY REACHED MOMOCHI HOUSE.

I THINK YOU KNOW THE REST...

PLIP

SUFF

IF YOU CAN EVER GET OUT OF HERE, DON'T CRY ANYMORE.

...IS AOI'S PAST.

THIS...

DO YOU PITY ME?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THERE IS NO PATHWAY BACK.

YOU'LL BE HERE FOREVER.

OH

HUH?

THIS CHILD...

I'LL KEEP YOU...

...INSIDE ME!

!

GR

AB

AAAAHH!

THIS WAY.

HUH?

RUN.

THE RECORD KEEPER?!

!

SHFF

EVERYTHING STORED WITHIN THAT DRAWER...

THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN...

...HE HAS HAD TO DEAL WITH MISFORTUNE SINCE BIRTH.

...REPRESENTS AOI'S KARMA.

THAT IS THE WAY OF THINGS.

...IS GETTING YOUNGER.

HER BODY...

...ARE UNPREDICT-ABLE.

MISFOR-TUNE AND GOOD LUCK...

"MISFOR-TUNE"?

WHY?

ALSO ...

...AOI HAS INCREDIBLE AYAKASHI POWERS DESPITE BEING HUMAN.

BECAUSE OF HIS IMMENSE KARMA...

DON'T LEAVE ME, STAY BY MY SIDE...

IT'S WHY HE IS FATED TO HAVE WEAK BONDS WITH HIS BLOOD RELATIVES.

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK BACK!

ARE YOU...?

IF YOU DO, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME.

VOON

RETURN-ING IS SCARY.

LEAVING IS FINE.

VISH

VISH

VISH

THESE...

...ARE THE SEVEN SIBLINGS...

WE ARE AYAKASHI.

WE NEVER ASSOCIATE WITH HUMANS.

BUT...

...HIMARI MOMOCHI...

PLEASE...

...LOOK AFTER AOI FOR US.

...

WAIT...

OH

I'M BACK IN THE ROOM WHERE I STARTED.

THUP

...

THANK YOU.

THANK YOU, AOI'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS...

TMP TMP TMP TMP

TMP
TMP
AOI!

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

IT'S STILL DAYBREAK.

HE HASN'T...

...TRANSFORMED BACK.

NUE...

BLUSH

I-IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!

SINCE YOU'RE HERE...

I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO SNEAK INTO MY BED-ROOM...

...WHILE NO ONE WAS WATCHING.

COME CLOSER.

SHWP

I WENT AND FOUND...

...THE DRAWERS OF THOUGHT.

PERHAPS...

...YOU DREAMT IT.

HEH

IT WASN'T A DREAM.

DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

I...

...DISCOVERED AOI'S PAST.

THAT'S...

BUT I GUESS IT WASN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU TO REVERT BACK.

VMP

SUFF

TUG

WHAT?

DO YOU DISLIKE ME...AS AN AYAKASHI?

YOU'RE A BAD GIRL...

...WHO DISOBEYS ME.

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME.

PERHAPS...

...YOU'RE ALREADY ENTRANCED BE ME.

HM? WHAT'S THIS?

THUP

To Himari

To Himari

FWIS

SORRY, HIMARI.
I'm opening it.
KRESH
FROM THAT KID?
FLUP
Akane
A LETTER ADDRESSED TO MOMOCHI HOUSE, HUH.

Aoi is dead.

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

NUE, AS YOU'RE THE WINNER...

...OF THIS WAGER... LET'S SEE...

LET'S SEE WHETHER HIMARI CAN FIND YOUR LOST PAST...

I'LL GRANT YOU A WISH–

GET OUT.

...

HOW SELFLESS!

CHAPTER 31

BUT...

...YOU STILL HAVEN'T RETURNED...

...TO YOUR HUMAN FORM.

I SHOULD JUST MAKE YOU MINE.
THE NUE IS DRAWING ME IN...
YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME.
PERHAPS YOU'RE ALREADY ENTRANCED BE ME.
YOU'RE A BAD GIRL WHO DISOBEYS ME.
CHAPTER 31
A Faceless Visitor

PERHAPS YOU'RE ALREADY ENTRANCED BE ME.

CHAPTER 31

A Faceless Visitor

I SHOULD JUST MAKE YOU MINE.

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME.

THE NUE IS DRAWING ME IN...

YOU'RE A BAD GIRL WHO DISOBEYS ME.

OH

H-HEY, THAT'S NOT FAIR!

SHOVE

I CAME HERE...TO DISCUSS SOMETHING IMPORTANT!

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT...

...

YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE THE NUE RIGHT NOW.

BLUSH

...AOI'S PAST.

SHMP

SO?

BEFORE WE START...

...ISN'T THIS ROOM KIND OF DARK?

IT'S MORNING.

AN HOUR-GLASS?

...MAKES ME UNEASY.

THE FACT I CAN'T SEE HIM WELL...

GLOW

YOU THINK SO?

FOOM

THANK YOU.

IS THIS BETTER?

IT'S AN ORDINARY LIGHT.

THAT'S LIKE MAGIC...

OF COURSE HE COULD DO THAT...

THE NUE IS AN AYAKASHI.

IF HE...

...NEVER TRANSFORMS BACK...

!

YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?

You changed the subject again...

...DOES THAT MEAN AOI HAS BECOME AN AYAKASHI?

I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE DRAWERS OF THOUGHT.

THAT GIRL IS AN AYAKASHI.

...WAS BORN INTO THE NANAMORI FAMILY?

DO YOU BELIEVE IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT AN AYAKASHI CALLED AKANE...

AOI...

...I VISITED THE NANAMORI FAMILY...

...AND AKANE...

...IS LIVING THERE LIKE A NORMAL CHILD.

BUT...

I THOUGHT SO.

THAT PLACE IS NOT LIKE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

YOU SAW HOW HIDAKA...

...SUFFERED AT HIS HOUSE.

AYAKASHI AND HUMANS CANNOT BE TOGETHER.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REGAIN ONE'S PAST?

I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU MEANT, YUKARI.

AOI NEEDS...

I'M FINE.

...ARE WHAT KEEPS HIM FROM HIS PAST.

HIMARI?

YUP

AOI'S FEELINGS OF GUILT...

...AND DOUBT...

...TO ACCEPT HIS PAST IN HIS HEART.

...BRING YOU BACK TO YOUR ORIGINAL FORM.

...I WILL...

NO MATTER WHAT...

SWFF

SWFF

SWFF

SWFF

FLUP

Aoi is dead.

...THIS LETTER...

BECAUSE ...

TMP

TMP

I HAVE TO.

...

YOU'RE REALLY GOING?

TMP

TMP

WAS THIS PATH ALWAYS THIS DARK?

AKANE KNOWS AOI?

NO ONE REMEMBERS ME OR EVEN KNOWS ABOUT ME.

IS IT BECAUSE AKANE IS AN AYAKASHI?

SWFF

THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO CHECK AT THE NANAMORI HOUSE.

BUT...

PRETTY MUCH.

YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO TELL ME ANYTHING, ARE YOU?

...

...THANK YOU FOR COMING WITH ME.

I...

SWFF

I KNEW IT.

AKANE!

TMP

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AOI.

SHE'S NOT THE SAME AS BEFORE.

YOU KNOW AOI?

VHHHM

AKANE...!

DASH

DASH

ISE?!

I'VE GOT TO CATCH HER.

WAIT, ISE!

EEEEK

SHE'S... GETTING BIGGER.

DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES!

HUH?

THIS AREA IS BECOMING PART OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

I KNEW IT.

TMP

HELLO! EXCUSE ME...

IT'S NOT THE SAME HOUSE I SAW IN THE SHELVES OF THOUGHT.

IT WAS NEAR THE NANAMORI HOUSE.

A SCREAM...

...AT THE LOCATION ON THE OLD MAP...

THE OLD HOUSE WAS PROBABLY NEXT TO KAGOME PARK...

AOI'S FATHER...

I TOLD HER TO CALM DOWN AND WAIT INSIDE.

YES... MY WIFE WAS UPSET.

UM, I HEARD A SCREAM.

YOU...

KLAK

AKANE IS MISSING.

I RAN INTO HER ON THE WAY HERE!

GRAB

REALLY?!

COULD YOU SHOW ME WHERE?

OH... SORRY. ODDLY ENOUGH...

...I KEEP GETTING LOST NEAR THE HOUSE.

AND WE CAN'T MAKE ANY PHONE CALLS... I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.

THE SPIRITUAL REALM...

WE'LL LOOK FOR HER TOGETHER!

SWF

SWF

YOU'RE RIGHT... THIS PATH SEEMS A LITTLE TOO LONG.

WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

WE'RE GETTING LOST.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

I'M PRETTY SURE I SAW HER HERE.

DID YOU...

...

YES. UM...

AKANE SENT YOU A LETTER?

I GOT A LETTER FROM AKANE.

HUH?

DID YOU...

DID YOU COME ALONE?

HUH?

AFTER YOUR LAST VISIT...

...AKANE SAID YOU WERE WITH SOME BOY.

BUT...

PERHAPS HE'S TAKEN AKANE!

...COME WITH THAT SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING BOY?

...MY WIFE AND I SAW ONLY YOU!

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

BEFORE WE MOVED INTO THIS HOUSE...

...THAT MYSTERIOUS YOUNG MAN HAD RETURNED...

WE THOUGHT ...

...BECAUSE ISE IS AN AYAKASHI.

THAT'S RIGHT. HE CAN'T SEE ISE...

PLEASE CALM DOWN. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

WHO WAS THIS?

I CAN'T...

...AND HAD TAKEN AKANE AS COMPENSA-TION.

...THAT MAN PAID US A VISIT.

I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THE HOUSE WE LIVED IN BEFORE.

MY FIRST WIFE HAD PASSED AWAY...

...AND MY CURRENT WIFE BECAME PREGNANT.

BUT AFTER SHE HAD GIVEN BIRTH, SHE GREW SICK.

NORMALLY, WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN...

...SO DISTRESSED.

BUT AT THE TIME...

...SHE WAS PROBABLY IN A WEAKENED STATE.

SHE WAS SADDENED OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR CHILD...

BUT THEN...

SADDENED OVER WHAT HAP-PENED...

EXCUSE ME.

THIS HOUSE IS NOT GOOD FOR YOUR CHILD.

THE MAN INVITED HIMSELF IN...

HE WAS A YOUNG MAN OF OTHER-WORLDLY BEAUTY.

FOR SOME REASON, I CAN'T REMEMBER HIS FACE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THE HEAVY AIR IN THE HOUSE BEGAN TO CLEAR.

...AND HE POINTED TO VARIOUS PLACES AROUND THE HOUSE.

AND THERE.

OH... OVER HERE.

THERE ARE QUITE A FEW LIVING HERE.

"AYAKASHI"...

AT THE TIME...

...HIS WORDS FELT LIKE THEY HAD TRUTH TO THEM.

I'M TRYING TO QUELL THE AYAKASHI.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD LIFT MY WIFE'S SPIRITS...

...SO WE MOVED TO THIS TOWN.

SOON AFTER WE DID...

SHHH

KRAK

...OUR FORMER HOME WAS HIT BY LIGHTNING AND BURNED DOWN.

...WE SUR-VIVED.

THANKS TO THAT YOUNG MAN...

GRIN

AS THAT MAN LEFT, HE SAID...

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

WHO IN THE WORLD ARE YOU?

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, SOMETHING BOTHERED ME.

PLEASE FORGIVE MY INTRU-SION.

KLAK

WE WERE FEARFUL OF HIS WORDS.

...YOU WILL ALWAYS PAY A PRICE.

...WHENEVER YOU MAKE A DEAL WITH SOMETHING INHUMAN...

IT'S LONG BEEN SAID THAT...

...AND TAKE FROM US AGAIN.

WE BELIEVED HE WOULD RETURN SOMEDAY...

I'M TAKING SOMETHING YOU'VE LOST.

DON'T WORRY.

AGAIN?

SO IF A STRANGE BOY HAS APPEARED...

...AND AKANE IS GONE...

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

IT'LL BE OKAY. I'M POSITIVE...

...AKANE IS SAFE.

...A MYSTERIOUS GIRL.

YOU'RE RATHER...

SORRY FOR TELLING YOU SUCH STRANGE THINGS.

...

SHE WAS SADDENED OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR CHILD...

UM...

BUT...

...THAT...

...DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

DO YOU REMEMBER AOI?

WHY?

...DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AOI?

HOW...

YOU REALLY ARE A MYSTERIOUS GIRL.

HE SHOULDN'T REMEMBER HIM AT ALL.

AOI...

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HIM SAY IT.

NO...

...IS DEAD.

Chapter 31 End

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

Bonus Stories

- Momochi House's Next Slam! 152
- Momochi Private Academy 157

Momochi House's NEXT Slam!

Request

OUR TASK IS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE NEXT BIG KABE-DON WILL BE!

EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT KABE-DON!

LET'S SEE...

ALL RIGHT, THIS IS OUR THEME FOR TODAY!

BAM

*Kabe-don ("wall-slam") is the act of cornering someone (usually a love interest) by slamming your hand on a wall above them.

SCRATCH SCRATCH

A KABE-DON IS...

YOU STILL DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YOU?

AOI...

W-WE'RE STARTING FROM HERE?

WHAT'S A KABE-DON?

THAT WILD ?!

A HEART-FELT...

I SEE... THEN HOW ABOUT THIS?

KRAK

Huh? That?

?

SWIFF

...SOME-THING LIKE THIS. GOT IT?

UM...

HERE'S ANOTHER!

SWIP

WOULD YOU HAVE PREFERRED AN IKURA-DON?

DON

OH!

NOTHING ABOUT FULL COMBO "DONS" FROM VIDEO GAMES!

For legal reasons.

THAT CONSID-ERATE!

KATSU-DON!

DON

!

THEN HOW ABOUT THIS?

DON

"HEAD-DON"

DON

Dizzy

FOOF

UHH...

DON'T OVERWHELM ME WITH YOUR PRESENCE!

HM?

WHAT KIND OF "DON" IS THAT?

A TATAMI-DON?

WHO KNOWS?

IT'S A THIGH-DON.

◎ End ◎

THERE'S STILL MORE!

NEXT UP IS "MOMOCHI PRIVATE ACADEMY"!

TODAY IS VALENTINE'S DAY.

B-BMP B-BMP

I BROUGHT CHOCO-LATES FOR SOMEONE, BUT...

MRMR MRMR

THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL ACCEPT MY CHOC-OLATES.

Heh...

ZOOM

In that case, I'll eat them myself!

THOSE CHOCO-LATES...

MY BELOVED TEACHER NUE IS SURROUNDED BY GIRLS!

Mr. Nue!

KYAH

SQUEE♡

...IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO TOSS THEM, I'D LIKE TO HAVE THEM.

AOI?!

Y-YOU DON'T NEED ANY FROM ME. I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY RECEIVED A BUNCH OF THEM.

UM, BUT...

PWOP

...I STILL HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY FROM THE PERSON I TRULY WANT.

B-BMP

WHAT?! MR. NUE?!

OH

I THOUGHT THOSE CHOCOLATES WERE MEANT FOR ME.

TO WHOM DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GIVE THOSE?

BE TRUE TO YOUR HEART.

YOU SHOULD PICK ME OVER THAT WEIRD TEACHER.

COME ON, HIMARI...

HUH?

HUH?

HUH?

DO YOU WANT SOMEONE TO BE SWEET TO YOU?

DO YOU WANT SOMEONE TO THRILL YOU?

WHOM DO YOU PREFER?

A DREAM?

"What the hell was that?

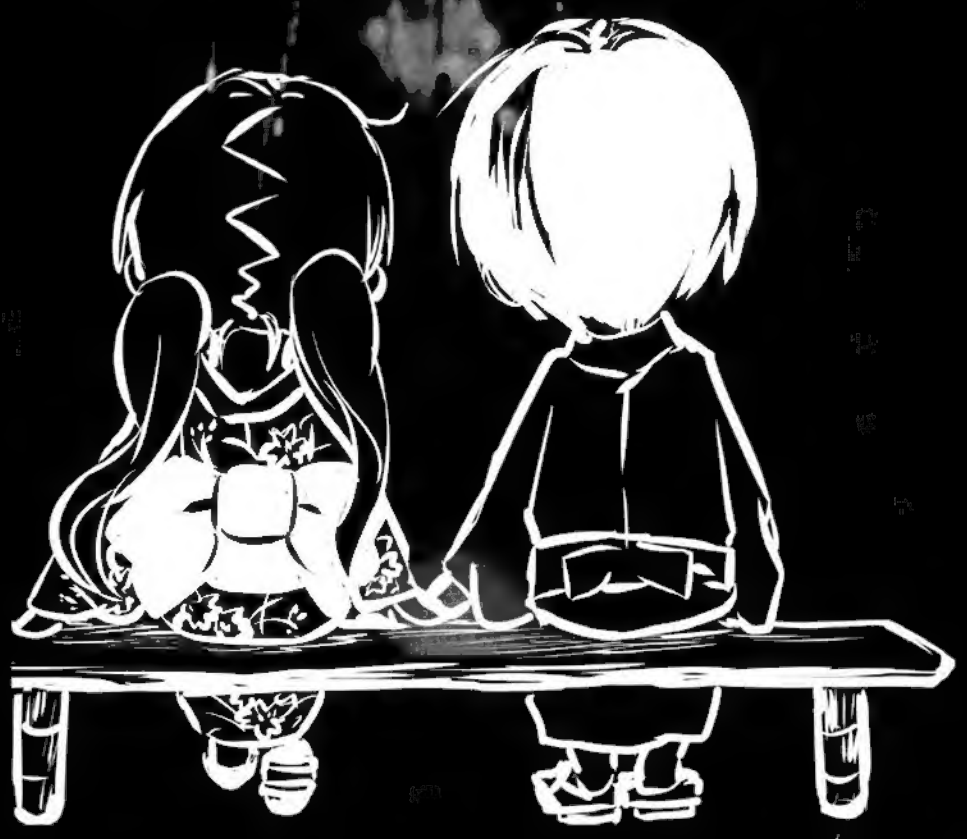
VUMP

◎ End ◎

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

I went to a fireworks show the other day. I rarely went to them when I was little, but now that I'm an adult, I get the urge to go.
I wanted this picture to show my characters reminiscing about vague memories, and I tried to invoke that end-of-summer feeling.
My color illustrations depict various seasons, but I think *Momochi House* is a summer story.
The next volume will take a little bit longer than usual to come out, but I hope you'll continue to read *Momochi House*!



The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

Aya Shouoto
2015

確音あや
二〇一五

For this cover, my editor suggested that I draw Aoi being held captive to mirror what's happening in the story. But once I drew it, it looked more like Aoi had gotten himself tangled up. Someone please cut him loose.

-Aya Shouoto

Aya Shouoto was born on December 25. Her hobbies are traveling, staying at hotels, sewing and daydreaming. She currently lives in Tokyo and enjoys listening to J-pop anime theme songs while she works.

The Demon Prince of Momochi House

Volume 8
Shojo Beat Edition

Story and Art by Aya Shouoto

Translation JN Productions
Touch-Up Art & Lettering Inori Fukuda Trant
Design Izumi Evers
Editor Nancy Thistlethwaite

MOMOCHISANCHI NO AYAKASHI OUJI Volume 8
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First published in Japan in 2015 by KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.
English translation rights arranged with KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, April 2017

www.viz.com

RATED T FOR TEEN
PARENTAL ADVISORY
THE DEMON PRINCE OF MOMOCHI HOUSE is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up.
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